

KCTCS GOOD NEWS REPORT

HIGHER EDUCATION BEGINS HERE

SEPTEMBER 2010

All 16 KCTCS Colleges Now Fully SACS Accredited with Addition of BGTC

The Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) has declared Bowling Green Technical College (BGTC) a fully comprehensive college with the Associate in Arts (AA) and Associate in Science (AS) degrees. Now, each of the 16 Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) colleges are comprehensive, meaning they offer both transfer and occupational/technical programs. The change at BGTC is effective fall 2010.

Last year, BGTC was granted SACS accreditation, retroactive to January 1, 2009, but the AA and AS degrees were not included at that point. BGTC filed a Substantive Change Prospectus to include the AA/AS degrees earlier this year, which SACS has now approved.

RIGHT: Students at BGTC, a fully accredited SACS technical college.

BELOW: Exterior view of one of the BGTC campus buildings.



"The Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) approved Bowling Green Technical College's change in mission, and the offering of the Associate in Arts and Associate in Science degree programs. The Commission requested no additional information nor required an onsite visit. This action completes the accreditation process of becoming a comprehensive college," said Iris Dotson, BGTC Chief Academic Officer.

According to the COC, accreditation signifies that an institution has a purpose appropriate to higher education and has resources, programs, and services sufficient to accomplish that purpose. Accreditation indicates that an institution maintains clearly specified educational objectives that are consistent with its mission and appropriate to the degrees it offers and that it is achieving its stated objectives.

"We are very pleased by the Commission's decision. It validates the actions we have taken over the past several years to earn this important distinction. Accreditation signals that



KENTUCKY COMMUNITY & TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM

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RIGHT: A group of students in one of Bowling Green Technical College's Mechatronics classes.

Bowling Green Technical College has successfully completed a rigorous process of self-examination and peer review and that it meets the highest standards of excellence widely accepted by other colleges and universities in the nation," said Nathan Hodges, BGTC President and Chief Executive Officer.

SACS is the recognized regional accrediting body in 11 southern U.S. states (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia) and in Latin America for those institutions of higher education that award associate, baccalaureate, master's or doctoral degrees. The Commission on Colleges (COC) is the representative body of the College Delegate Assembly and is charged with carrying out the accreditation process.

To gain or maintain accreditation with the COC, an institution must comply with the standards contained in the *Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement* and with the policies and procedures of the COC.

Colleges nationwide frequently use a college's accreditation status to decide whether to accept transfer credits from other schools.

Bowling Green Technical College is a member of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System. The College began in 1939 as the Western Trade School and became Bowling Green Technical College in 1998 as part of Kentucky's postsecondary education reform.

The SACS accreditation process involved several steps, including an initial application, a preliminary site visit, completion of an extensive compliance certification document, off-site peer review, and on-site review by a visiting team comprised of administrators, faculty and staff from other SACS-accredited institutions. Faculty and staff across the college participated in the compliance certification process, which culminated in April 2009 with the review by the visiting team.

To earn accreditation, a college must comply with specific standards pertaining to its mission, governance, institutional effectiveness,



academic programs, faculty credentials, library and learning resources, student affairs and services, and financial and physical resources.

KCTCS was formed as a result of the *Kentucky Postsecondary Education Improvement Act of 1997*, commonly known as House Bill 1. There were 13 community colleges included at that time and 15 technical colleges. (Lexington Community College was added to KCTCS in 2004 and became Bluegrass Community and Technical College.) The community colleges already had SACS accreditation, but the technical colleges were accredited by the Council on Occupational Education. To assist the consolidation of community colleges and technical colleges, the KCTCS Board of Regents passed a resolution supporting single accreditation (SACS). From 2001-2005, the community colleges and technical colleges went through the SACS consolidation process, resulting in 12 consolidated KCTCS colleges. Henderson Community College and Hopkinsville Community College were in single college districts and already SACS accredited. In 2008, Gateway Community and Technical College became SACS accredited. With the approval of SACS accreditation for BGTC in 2009, KCTCS now consists of 16 SACS-accredited colleges.

